

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 ACDA-07
SAJ-01 OMB-01 MC-02 /075 W
-----281425Z 010460 /44

R 280900Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9949
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USCINCEUR
COMIDEASTFOR
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN
US ARMY SECT. RIYADH

S E C R E T SANA 4528
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, MASS, PFOR, PINR, YE, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS IN YEMEN

1. WIT ONSET OF US MILITARY DELIVERIES, I ASKED YAR CHEIF-
OF-STAFF AL-SHASHMI ON DEC. 26 ABOUT STATUS OF SOVIET MILITARY
MISSION WHICH HAD REPORTEDLY INCREASED OVER PAST FEW MONTHS.

2. AL-GHASHMI REPLIED THAT THERE ARE PRESENTLY WITH THE
YEMENI ARMY 104 SOVIET MILITARY ADVSIORS, DOWN FROM 109.
(WE HAD PREVIOUSLY ESTIMATED 114 AS A LOW, 140 AS A HIGH.)
AL-GHASHMI CONTINUED THAT FIVE SOVIET ADVISORS
RECENTLY RETURNED HOME BECAUSE "THERE WAS LITTLE WORK FOR
THEM TO DO". AL-GHASHMI NOTED THAT THERE IS MUCH
DISSATISFACTION WTIHIN THE SOVIET ADVISORY TEAM
BECAUSE OF LACK OF WORK AND FOR THIS REASON CONSIDER-
ABLE PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE TEAM HAVE TAKEN PLACE
OVER THE LAST YEAR OR SO.

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3. IN REPLY TO MY HOPE THAT THE SOVIET MILITARY
PRESENCE WILL BE FURTHER REDUCED, AL-GHASHMI SAID
THAT HE WANTS THE DEPARTURE OF ALL SOVIETS, NOT JUST A
DECREASE IN THEIR NUMBBERS, HE NOTED THAT FURTHER
REDUVVIONS WILL, OF COURSE, DEPENDND ON THE SPEED WITH
WHICH MODERNIZATION OF THE YEMENI ARMY WITH WESTERN

ARMS WILL TAKE PLACE.

4. AL-GHASHMI ALSO VOLUNTEERED TO PROVIDE ME WITH A LIST OF NAMES AND RANKS OF THE SOVIET ADVISORS IF I SO WISHED. I SAID THIS INFORMATION WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL AND ADVISED IM THAT COL. PRADOS, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT DURING THE CONVERSATION, WILL COME BY IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO OBTAIN THIS LIST.

5. COMMENT:IT'S GOOD TO HEAR THAT SOVIET MISSION HAS DROPPED ABOUT 10 PERCENT FROM OUR PREVIOUS LOWEST ESTIMATE (AND 20 PERCENT BELOW OUR PREVIOUS HIGHEST ESTIMATE) BUT THE OBJECT IS TO GET THE SOVIETS OUT OF THE YEMENI MILITARY FIELD COMPLETELY. WE WILL REMIND AL-GHASHMI OF THIS MUTUAL GOAL FROM TIME TO TIME IN A LOW KEY. THIS GOAL IS PROBABLY REALIZABLE IN SHORT RUN IN GROUND FORCES, BUT SOVIET GROUND ADVISORS ACCOUNT FOR ONLY ABOUT HALF OF LOCAL MISSION. REST OF SOVIETS ARE DEEPLY ENTRENCHED IN THE AIR FORCE, AND THESE ARE ADVISORS ON WHOM AL-GHASHMI IS MOT DEPENDENT. THEY TRAIN YEMENI PILOTS, DO ALSMOST ALL MAINTENANCE ON THE ELEVEN MIG-17S AND THREE IL-18S AND CONTINUE TO PARCEL OUT SPARE PARTS. GETTING RID OF SOVIET AIR FORCE ADVISORS NOW WOULD BE LIKE DISARMING YEMENI AIR FORCE AS SAUDI AIR MODERNIZATION APPEARS TO BE SEVERAL YEARS AWAY.
SCOTES

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NNN

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